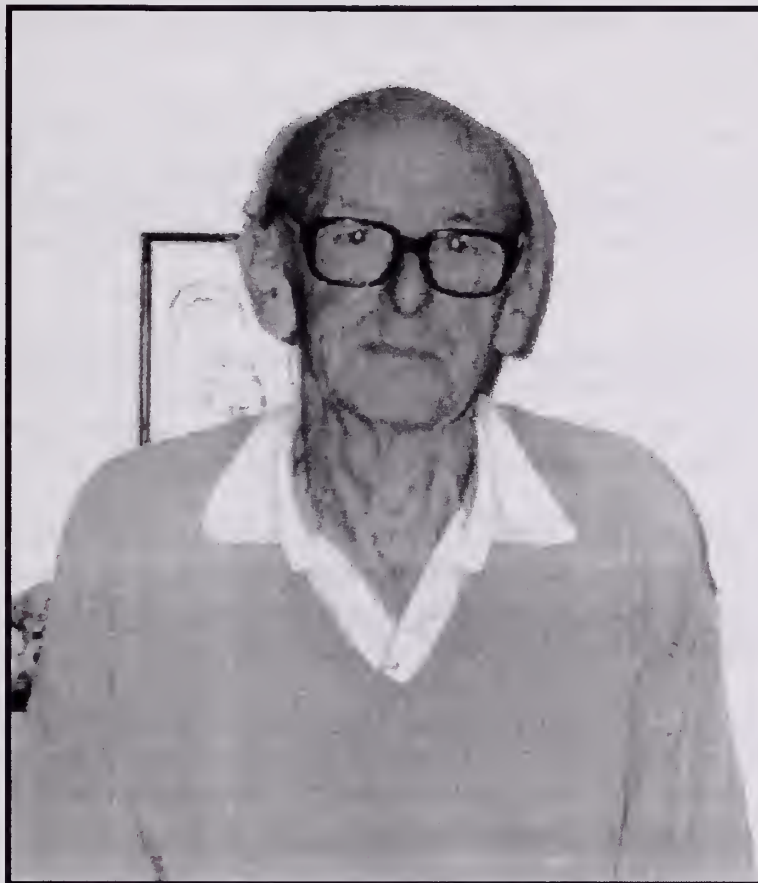


## OBITUARY—NORMAN W GARDNER

*Margaret S Morley, Noel Gardner and Bruce W Hayward*



**Norm Gardner : 16 September 1920—31 July 2006**

Norm Gardner joined the Conchology Section in 1947 and was a stalwart member until a few years of ill-health just before his death in 2006. Both Norm and his wife, Noel, were made Life Members in the late 1950's.

Norm and Noel shared a common interest in shells. She had joined the Section when 12 years old in 1933. They met at the club and two years after Norm became a member they were married in 1949. From then on most of their spare time was devoted to shells, the Conchology Section and to helping Baden Powell at the Auckland Museum.

It is hard to believe today, but Baden didn't drive, so Norm used to act as his chauffeur. Norm and Noel became volunteers at the Auckland Museum, outstaying several curators, and between them they clocked up a mind-boggling 100 years of service. In 2006, their contribution was recognized when they were made Honorary Life Members of the Auckland Museum Institute. Shortly before Norm died the Marine Department of the Auckland Museum held a morning tea in their honour.

Their shell collection was gradually built up over many years. They travelled all over New Zealand on camping trips spending many happy hours looking for shells both on the beach and in the bush. Norm's interest included microscopic marine shells. Members were made welcome in his basement study at their Birkenhead house where he was always willing to identify specimens or explain the intricacies of taxonomy. Noel says, "I wouldn't dare dust in there!" Norm's identifications had not only the scientific name, but the family and authority which were helpful in learning. This was before Baden Powell's classic book published in 1979, when the main text book was Suter's Manual and Plates. Norm was popular at the end of conchology meetings when help was needed with identifications, having been brought up on Suter he could readily track synonymies.

From 1952 to 1981 Norm and Noel were Conchology Section Co-Editors, initially of the two series of Bulletins, and Subsequently of Poirieria which was established in 1962. In nearly all Poirieria journals there were articles by Norm describing various families, documenting observations, including drawings, and bringing us up to date with names. Norm's articles were valuable in bridging the gap between Suter and later scientific papers.

Norman was continuously on the committee for many years and appointed President from 1954 to 1956 and again in 1977, however he was not happy in the limelight, much preferring to be active behind the scenes. In the Bulletins it is recorded that he held the post of Librarian for some years. He had a dry sense of humour and his delightful soft chuckle was frequently heard. More recently he was elected Vice Patron.

Norm was a cabinet maker and used this skill in 1972 to make a large wooden trophy of a volute awarded to writers of the best article in Poirieria. Many hours were also spent making smaller versions for winners to keep. His wide knowledge of molluscs made him a competent judge, both for this award and for Shell Shows. Norm played a major role in organizing the 1978 Shell Show.

In their own right the Gardners became skilled malacologists and undertook research particularly on land snails, initially in New Zealand, but later in the Pacific Islands (especially in the Solomon's where Norm collected large land snails during visits over several years). This knowledge was used to identify and catalogue land snails in the Auckland Museum Collections.

Norm and Noel organized numerous field trips for the Conchology Section. On one land snail trip to Waipoua in 1980, we were driving in convoy when Norm stopped at Helensville to take a break. He immediately set off to access the tidal estuary via a decrepit landing platform. As a new chum (MM) this didn't seem a likely collecting place. However we were soon getting up to our knees in soft mud and inspired by Norm's lecture on thousands of *Potamopyrgus estuarinus*! The car owners however were not so pleased! During a land snail visit to Fiordland with Jim Goulstone they were so badly attacked by sand flies that they wore plastic bags over their hands!

Shells have been named in his honour. *Potamopyrgus gardneri* was discovered by Norm and Noel in a swampy stream in Northland, the name now lost under synonymy with *P. creswelli*. *Placostylus ambagiosus gardneri* is a subfossil found in consolidated dunes behind Tom Bowling Bay. A third name may eventuate as a result of Norm's work on the Solomon Islands land snails with Belgium Scientist, Andre Delsaerdt. Norm also described and named some species (Gardner 1977a).

Norm's contributions to both the Conchology Section and Auckland War Memorial Museum have been immense. His quiet, supportive presence and expertise are sadly missed.

## Selected Publications

(Many short articles in *Poirieria* and *Papustyla* unlisted)

- Gardner, NW and Gardner, EN 1949 The native land snails of Rangitoto Island. *Auckland Museum Conchology Club Bulletin* 5:7-13
- Gardner, NW and Gardner, EN 1951 Some observations on the Fijian snail *Placostylus* (*Callintocharis*) *gracile* (Brod). *Auckland Museum Conchology Club Bulletin* 9:9-11
- Gardner, NW 1966 *Iredalina*, our golden volute. *Poirieria* 3(2):22-23
- Gardner, NW 1966 High tidal molluscs of Rangitoto Island. *Poirieria* 3(4/5):59-60
- Gardner, NW 1970 A new genus and species of freshwater snail (Hydrobiidae) from northern New Zealand. *Transactions of the Royal Society of New Zealand. Biological Sciences* 12:181-184
- Gardner, NW 1971 New Zealand recent Fissurellidae. *Poirieria* 5(6):107-116
- Gardner, NW 1973 Mussels—Mytilidae in New Zealand. *Poirieria* 7(2):33-38
- Gardner, NW 1975 Our Wentletraps. *Poirieria* 8(2):26-30
- Gardner, NW 1976 Native landsnails of Resolution Island, Fiordland. *Auckland Museum Conchology Section Bulletin* 1(new series):24-27
- Gardner, NW 1977a A new Flammulinid land snail from the northern block of Northland (Endodontidae: Phenacohelicinae). *Bulletin* 2 (new series):8-10
- Gardner, NW 1977b Collecting snails in the Lake Hauroko area of southern Fiordland, New Zealand. *Poirieria* 9:35-41.
- Ramsay, GW, Gardner, NW 1977 Endangered and rare New Zealand invertebrate species. *The Weta* 1 (1):3-5
- Gardner, NW 1978 Molluscs from the channels of Parengarenga. *Poirieria* 9(4):75-77
- Gardner, NW 1978 *Lepsiella scobina* (Quoy & Gaimard) - our oyster borer. *Poirieria* 9(5):86-88
- Gardner, NW 1979 *Pseudovermis hancocki* Challis. *Poirieria* 10(4):66
- Gardner, NW 1981 *Trivirostra oryza* (Lamarck) - another new record. *Poirieria* 10:77
- Gardner, NW 1982 Some shells of South Santo—Vanuatu. *Poirieria* 12(1):7-9
- Gardner, NW 1989 Tree snails from New Zealand. *Papustyla* 11:3
- Gardner, NW 1990 Cape Maria landsnails—Northland, New Zealand. *Papustyla* 3:4-5